

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NEW YORK

STATE

Date Entered

14 00

Name

Location

Moore, Benjamin, Estate

Muttontown vicinity
Nassau County



Also Notified

Honorable Jacob K. Javits
Honorable Daniel P. Moynihan
Honorable Norman F. Lent

COPY OF CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Benjamin Moore Estate

AND/OR COMMON

Chelsea

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Route 25A

CITY, TOWN

Muttontown

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4th

STATE

New York

VICINITY OF

CODE
036COUNTY
NassauCODE
059**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☒ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Nassau County, c/o Edward J. Smits, Director Nassau County Museum

STREET & NUMBER

Dept of Parks & Recreation, Muttontown Road

CITY, TOWN

Syosset

VICINITY OF

STATE

New York

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

240 Old Country Road

CITY, TOWN

Mineola

STATE

New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New York State Historic Resources Survey

DATE

1978

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau

CITY, TOWN

Albany

STATE

New York

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Chelsea, the forty-two acre Benjamin Moore Estate, is located southwest of the intersection of Routes 25A and 106 in Muttontown in the heart of Long Island's Gold Coast. The main house, outbuildings, and surviving gardens of the original estate are still in private residential use. The property will become part of the five hundred acre Muttontown Preserve upon the death of Mrs. (Moore) McKay, the original owner. The major approach to the estate winds south from Route 25A through picturesquely landscaped grounds to the central driving court and main house. The house is fronted by a broad lawn lined with trees and bordered at the northern end by a brick wall inspired by the wall of the Summer Palace in Peking. The estate's present forty-two acres include the property's most significant landscape and architectural features. The property consists of the gate house, picturesque roadways, garage, conservatory, main house, elaborate gardens, octagonal gazebo, shed and tool house, and large open lawns.

The main estate building was designed in 1923-4 by William Delano in an unusual eclectic design incorporating Chinese and French Renaissance sources. It is roughly U-shaped, two and one-half stories high, hip and gable roofed, and covered with whitewashed concrete block on a concrete foundation. The alignment of first-story casement windows with a row of bulls-eye windows above emphasizes the horizontality of the main facade, typical of Delano's style. The steeply pitched roof further attenuates the facade. Interrupting the striking simplicity of this facade are the undulating roof, four irregularly spaced chimneys, and a large brick tourelle with conical roof. The off-center entrance is framed with a simple molded architrave and a modest, shaped pediment embracing a cartouche. In contrast to the severe front, the rear of the house is a romantic profusion of varying projections and roof and wall treatments. Specifically reminiscent of seventeenth-century French manor house architecture are the shaped terraces, steeply pitched roof, elongated casement windows, and tourelle-like projections terminating in engaged, conical roofs. The western ell of the house was the original service wing. The eastern ell contains a gallery and open arcade facing a flagstoned terrace. The wing is continued in a two and one-half story, hip-roofed section housing the living room on the ground floor. The hip-roofed service wing added by Delano in 1929 is attached to the east end of the main house with a brick, arcaded porte-cochere. The house's site is enhanced by a complex set of gardens, fountains, hedges, and lily pond. Belgian blocks line the moat which surrounds the southeast corner of the mansion. Bridges cross the moat on the east and south elevations and separate the house from the grounds.

The interior of the house features furnishings purchased by the Moore's on numerous shopping trips to Europe. Perhaps the most notable of these is the dining room west of the entrance hall which was originally the Duke of Wellington's breakfast room at Stratford-Saye. This impressive, formal room is paneled in antique pine and features a pedimented

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Muttontown, Nassau County

CONTINUATION SHEET

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overmantel. From this space a small, oval breakfast room leads to the original service area of the house at the western end. The library, west of the entry, is enriched by built-in bookcases and an overmantel in the Louis XV style. The most impressive feature of the interior is the long gallery extending from the front hall to the living room at the southern extremity. On one side, facing the moat, bay windows alternate with screens decorated by Jose Maria Sert (c.1925). A wrought iron spiral staircase articulated on the exterior by a brick turret yields access to the second floor occupied by bedrooms and sitting rooms and by servants' accommodations above the service wing. The 1929 service wing houses guest rooms and a school room.

The garage, located to the north of the main house, is modest in design and covered in white stucco. The hip-roofed, I-shaped structure has two, two-story houses on either side of a long, one-story automobile bay. The south facade of the bay functions as a wall which encloses the front lawn. Across from the garage and a small stream are three long low wooden buildings, utilitarian in style.

The conservatory, east of the garage, consists of a large greenhouse attached to a modest, stuccoed, two-story house. An octagonal, wooden gazebo is located to the south of the conservatory.

The estate's gate house is located off North Hempstead Turnpike, northwest of the main house. The stuccoed, two and one-half story house is three bays wide and in the style of the main house. Its steep hip roof is pierced by dormers.

05956.000 ⁰³⁹ 008	estate
05956.000108	landscape features
05956.000109	main house
05956.000110	garage
05956.000111	conservatory
05956.000112	gatehouse
05956.000113	shed + tool house
05956.000114	gazebo

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1923-4 BUILDER/ARCHITECT William Adams Delano

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Chelsea is the former Benjamin Moore estate, one of the best preserved of Long Island's Gold Coast mansions. The 1923-4 estate and its 1929 additions were designed by William Adams Delano, of the well known firm of Delano and Aldrich, in an unusual eclectic combination of Chinese and French Renaissance elements. The grounds, also designed by Delano with the assistance of Mrs. Alexandra Moore and Umberto Innocenti of Innocenti and Webel, preserve one of the more imaginative landscape designs of the period. Still in private residential use, the estate is near the center of the Muttontown Preserve, a five hundred acre nature preserve owned by Nassau County, much of which was contributed by the Moore's over the past forty years.

The Moore's, longtime New York City residents, were moved to build the estate on a trip to the Orient in 1920-22. Mrs. McKay (Moore) reminisced: "We saw a house on the Upper Yangtze River that we saw when we were on a boat ... It was white with a black roof and had cattle in the courtyard and water around the corner. We decided right then and there that we wanted to try to reproduce that." They chose William Delano who lived nearby in Syosset as the architect because "We looked for somebody ... who would do what we wanted .. He was a charming person and easy to work with." In 1903, William Delano and Chester Aldrich established partnership. The firm designed many buildings of note, both public and residential. Some of their best known works were the Colony and Knickerbocker Clubs in New York, Hotchkiss School, John D. Rockefeller's estate at Pocantico Hills, Otto Kahn's estate in Cold Spring Harbor, and Washington's 1933 Post Office Department Building.

The main house is small in relation to the whole estate, reflecting fashionable 1920's thinking about estate design. It was felt then that elegance and luxury could be accommodated in more restrained, less ostentatious settings than those provided before. Chelsea represented a new kind of romanticism in its simple design which was based less on its historic imagery than on saner, more urbane interiors and more carefully studied skylines and plans. While the building's severe, planar facade and minimal ornament indicate a rational approach to design, more picturesque attitudes are evident in the house's land-hugging profile, rambling roof, and corner moat. The size and placement of the rooms defined the asymmetrical plan and shape of the house.

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Concerned with the effects of climate, Delano oriented the house north-south, affording sunlight for the living room and bedrooms and the cooler northern exposure for the more functional elements like the entry and staircase. The service wing, the least important part of the house in terms of the hierarchy of social life, is partly hidden by landscaping. While Delano often designed the interiors of his houses, the Moore's furnished theirs themselves.

The land was purchased in 1923 and the house completed in 1925. The Moore's used it as their principal residence and never owned a house in New York City, unlike many contemporaries who used their Gold Coast estates only seasonally. The estate reached its greatest extent in the late 1920's, about one hundred twenty acres. After the death of Benjamin Moore, his widow married Robert Gordon McKay, an investment banker and lifelong friend, in 1957. After his death in 1958 Mrs. McKay continued to occupy the estate with her children. In 1964 part of the estate was donated to the county to serve as a nature preserve, now the second largest park in the county.

Chelsea is a valuable testimony to the Gold Coast era in the development of Long Island and of American architecture in general. The excellent state of preservation of the house and grounds and the unusual bucolic setting extending over several hundred acres make it especially valuable. Architecturally the mansion preserves an approach to estate design and domestic architecture which was typical of the 1920's and profitable for study today.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 42

QUADRANGLE NAME Hicksville

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,8 6,23,1,1,5 4,5,2,2,0,0,0

B 1,8 6,23,0,5,0 4,5,2,1,9,8,0

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 1,8 6,23,1,7,0 4,5,2,1,4,3,0

D 1,8 6,23,4,0,0 4,5,2,1,3,9,0

E 1,8 6,23,4,7,0 4,5,2,1,6,5,0

F 1,8 6,23,4,4,0 4,5,2,1,7,5,0

G 1,8 6,23,2,5,0 4,5,2,1,7,4,0

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Continuation Sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

11 FORM PREPARED BY

; For Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau
Agency Bldg. #1, Empire State Plaza 518-474-0479

NAME / TITLE

Research: Terry Winters

Editing: Mary Dierickx & Peter Kaufman

ORGANIZATION

SPLIA 11/25/77

Architectural

DATE

Preservation Consultants 2/12/79

STREET & NUMBER

516

TELEPHONE

93 No. Country Rd. 941-9444

23 VanDam Street

212-924-7603

CITY OR TOWN

Setauket, NY 11733

New York, NY 10013

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE xx

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

3/5/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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Cortissox, Royal and Chester B. Price. Portraits of Ten Country Houses Designed by Delano and Aldrich. Garden City, NY, 1924.

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"Robert G. McKay." (obituary) New York Times, (November 28, 1958): p.30, col.4.

Robertson, Howard. "Distinction in Architecture - The Work of the New York Architects, Delano & Aldrich." Architect and Building News 122 (1929): p. 629-34.

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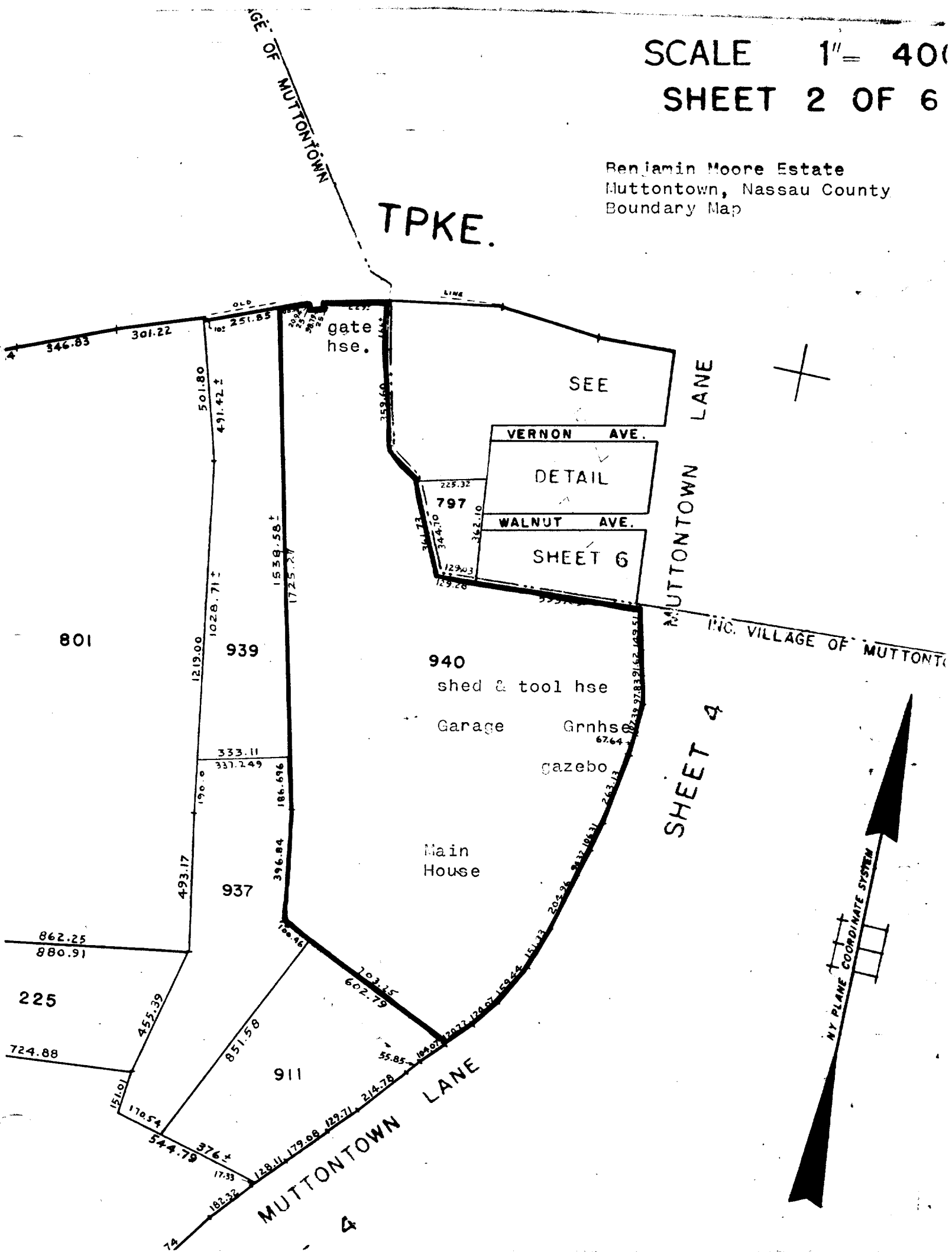
The Benjamin Moore estate is irregularly shaped. Starting at a point on North Hempstead Turnpike approximately 1000' west of the southwest corner of Muttontown Lane and North Hempstead Turnpike, the property line runs west roughly 439', south about 1725', southeast approximately 703', northeast roughly 1395', north roughly 339', east about 724', then northwest approximately 1012' back to the starting point.

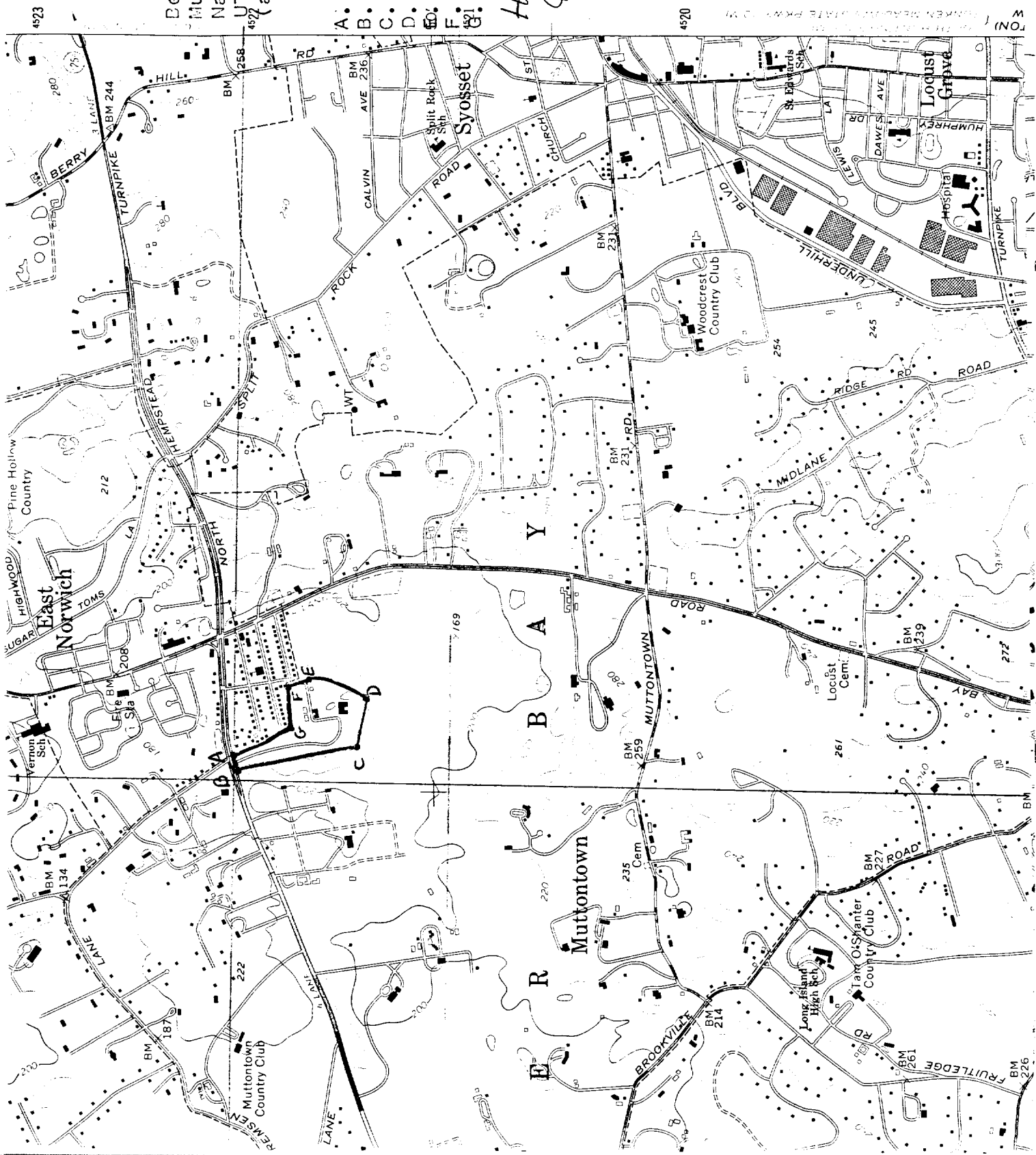
SCALE 1" = 400'

SHEET 2 OF 6

Benjamin Moore Estate
Muttontown, Nassau County
Boundary Map

TPKE.





Benjamin Moore Estate
Muttontown
Nassau County
UTM References
(all in zone 18)

	Easting	Northing
A.	623115	4522000
B.	623050	4521980
C.	623170	4521430
D.	623400	4521390
E.	623470	4521650
F.	623440	4521750
G.	623250	4521740

HICKSVILLE
QUAD